1 1. A method of searching a collection of linked objects and displaying the results,

2   comprising:

3   acquiring a search group of heterogeneously typed objects, wherein at least one of

4   the objects comprises a link to another object;

5   determining for at least a portion of the objects in the search group a set of targets

6   of links from the objects, including determining whether the link targets

7   are inside the search group; and

8   displaying a representation of at least one searched object, the representation

9   having at least one display attribute determined by the set of link targets.

10 2. A method of searching a collection of linked objects and displaying the results,

11   comprising:

12   acquiring a search group of objects, wherein at least one of the objects comprises

13   a link to another object;

14   determining for at least a portion of the objects in the search group a set of targets

15   of links from the objects, including determining whether the link targets

16   are inside the search group; and

17   displaying a representation of at least one searched object, the representation

18   having at least one display attribute determined by the set of link targets,

19   wherein displayed representations are arranged into a plurality of display layers,

20   and wherein the display layers can be independently hidden or displayed.

21 3. The method of claim 1 or 2, wherein the display attribute is selected from the

22   group consisting of color, shape, size, position, highlighting, graphical flags, and

23   labeling text.

24 4. The method of claim 1 or 2, wherein representations of a plurality of objects are

25   displayed on a graph.

1   5.   The method of claim 1 or 2, wherein representations of a plurality of objects are

2   displayed, and wherein at least one link between objects is depicted by a

3   connector between the representations.

4   6.   The method of claim 5, wherein a display attribute of the connector is determined

5   by a property selected from the group consisting of the type of the linking object,

6   the type of the link target, and the type of the link.

7   7.   The method of claim 1 or 2, wherein a display attribute of the representation is

8   determined by object metadata.

9   8.   The method of claim 1 or 2, wherein determining link targets includes recursively

10   determining targets of links of an expanded set of objects comprising the original

11   search group and the objects linked to by the search group.

12   9.   The method of claim 8, wherein the recursion level is in the range of 1-10.

13   10.   The method of claim 1 or 2, wherein the search objects comprise documents

14   selected from the group consisting of legal opinions, legal treatises, statutes,

15   briefs, and law review articles.

16   11.   The method of claim 1 or 2, wherein the search objects comprise scientific or

17   medical writings, and wherein the links comprise citations to other scientific or

18   medical writings.

19   12.   The method of claim 1 or 2, wherein the search objects comprise patents and

20   patent applications and the links comprise references to related patents and patent

21   applications.

22   13.   The method of claim 1 or 2, further comprising annotating at least one of the

23   search objects.

1   14.   The method of claim 1 or 2, wherein at least a portion of the searched objects and

2   link targets are classified into a plurality of groups, further comprising setting a

3   display attribute for all members of a group.

4   15.   The method of claim 1 or 2, wherein displayed representations are sorted on at

5   least one axis according to a property of the objects represented.

6   16.   A method of searching a collection of objects and displaying the results,

7   comprising:

8   acquiring a first search group of objects;

9   displaying a representation of at least a portion of the first search group of objects;

10   and

11   annotating one or more members of the first search group of objects, wherein

12   annotations may be selectively displayed with the representation of the

13   annotated objects.

14   17.   The method of claim 16, further comprising:

15   acquiring a second search group of objects; and

16   displaying a representation of at least a portion of the second search group of

17   objects, wherein displaying the representation of annotated objects that are

18   members of both the first search group and the second search group

19   includes selectively displaying annotations of the objects.

20   18.   The method of claim 16, wherein the representations are displayed on a graph.

21   19.   The method of claim 16, wherein the objects include links to other objects, and

22   wherein at least a portion of the links are displayed as connectors between

23   representations of the objects.

24   20.   The method of claim 19, further comprising annotating one or more links.